

R E M A R K S
ON THE
B E A U T I E S
OF
P O E T R Y.

MARKS
ON THE
DEATHS

OF



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OF

P

R E M A R K S

O N T H E

B E A U T I E S

O F

P O E T R Y.

By DANIEL WEBB, Esq; *of Dublin*

Then Criticism the Muse's Handmaid prov'd,
To dress her Charms, and make her more below'd.

Essay on Criticism.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-Mall*.

MDCCLXII.

REMARKS

ON THE

BEAUTY

OF THE

DANIEL WEBSTER



THEY ARE THE
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LONDON

Printed by H. and J. DODD, in Pall Mall.

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Aspasia, Hortensius, Eugenio.

Hort. **Y**OU did not know, Eugenio,
that the Gentleman who has
just left us, is a Poet. You saw how he
took fire at your reflection on Rhyme. Your
assertion, that Blank Verse is better adapted
to the genius of Poetry, and the general
improvement of Eloquence, cannot be dis-
puted, whenever the abuse of rhyme is car-
ried so far, as that the Sound becomes more

B

the

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the object of our attention than the Sense; or, that the force and beauty of Expression are sacrificed to an insignificant jingle. Mr. Dryden, I remember, speaking of Rhyme, says—"What it adds to sweetness, it takes away from sense; and he who loses least by it, may be called a gainer."

Asp. AND yet there is something so pleasing in the chiming of sounds, or else, from the influence of early impressions, we are so accustomed to receive and feel it as a pleasure, that I am persuaded, Eugenio's opinion, were it made public, would not have many followers.

Eng. You do well, Aspasia, to distinguish between things pleasing in themselves, and such as are so merely from the force of habit. Were there any thing truly delightful in the nature of Rhymes, it is not probable,
that

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that the ancients should have over-looked this advantage; nor would it have been reserved for a set of trifling Monks, to sing them into reputation. But these are general reflections: in order to decide the matter in debate, it would be necessary to make a particular inquiry into the Beauties of Versification; and to determine from them the merits of its several modes.

Asp. I wish, Eugenio, you would undertake this task. One condition, however, I must insist on, that in Love matters you shew us some indulgence.——

What will you leave us, if you steal off Rhyme?

Hor. JINGLING is so pretty a substitute of sentiment, it is so wedded to gallantry, that it were a cruelty to divorce them. I will secure you, Aspasia, against any such at-

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tempt; by the authority of Shakespear; who, in the commerce of Love, places Rhymes in so respectable a light, that he sets them on a level even with bracelets, rings, and sweetmeats — The passage is decisive. —

E. - - - - - My gracious Duke,
This man hath witch'd the bosom of my
child :

Thou, thou, Lyfander, thou hast *giv'n her*
rhymes,

And stol'n th' impression of her fantasie
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds,
conceits,

Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, (mes-
sengers

Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth.)

M. N. D.

This, Eugenio, is an authority which you
must not dispute; and, as Aspasia has made

conz

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 5

conditions for her love songs, I must beg a neutrality for epigrams, riddles, and the modern ode. Let me add to these, that species of poetry, which we call the Mock-Heroic: for, here, I think, the rhyme seems to forward the playfulness in the ideas.

Eng. As I mean to confine my observations to truth and nature, the exemptions you have insisted on, will take place of course.

THE sole aim of versification is harmony. To understand this properly, we must divide it into two kinds. The first consists in a general flow of verse, most pleasing to the ear, but independent on the sense: the second, in bringing the sound or measure of the verse to correspond with, and accompany the idea. The former may be called a verbal harmony: the latter a sentimental.

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If we consider the flow of verse merely as music, it will then be allowed, [a] that variety is no less necessary than sweetness; and that a continued repetition of the same movements, must be as tiresome in poetry, as it would be in music. On examining Mr. Pope's verses, we shall find, that in eighteen out of twenty, the pauses rest on the fourth and last, or the fifth and last syllables: and that, almost without exception, the period is divided into two equal lines, and, as it were, link'd by the rhyme into a couplet.

[a] Καὶ ἐνὶ λήξει κρατὶς παύει, ὅστις αἰ ἔχει φλογαὶ
 πταπαυλας τε καὶ μιᾶς βολας ἀρμονίας — ρυθμοὶ τε ἄλλοι ἀ-
 λοί, καὶ τᾶς αἰ φωνῆς αἰ καλυμνῶναι προσώδια διαφορεῖ, κλισί-
 τες αἰ τῇ ποιικιλίᾳ τῶν λόγων.

Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat.

For

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For example——

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, || and God the soul ;
That chang'd thro' all, || and yet in all the
same,

Great in the Earth, || as in the Ætherial
frame ;

Warms in the sun, || refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, || and blossoms in the
trees ;

Lives thro' all life, || extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, || operates unspent.

Essay on Man.

EVERY ear must feel the ill effect of the
[b] monotony in these lines ; the cause of
it is obvious ; this verse consists of ten

[b] Διαπνεύουσι τε καὶ ταυτολογία φησὶ δὲ, μετὰ βλακῆς
ἐρχομένης ἐν τῇ φωνῇ. Καὶ γὰρ ἡ μετὰ βλακῆς φωνὴ ἔχει χροῖαν
πᾶν.
Dion. Hal. De Struct. Orat. Sect. 12.

B 4

syllables,

§ REMARKS ON THE

syllables, or five feet: when the pause falls on the fourth syllable, we shall find, that we pronounce the six last in the same time that we do the four first; so that the couplet is not only divided into two equal lines, but each line, with respect to time, is divided into two equal parts —

As,

Warms in the sun, || refreshes in the breeze,
Glow's in the stars, || and blossoms in the
trees.

Or else, the pause falls on the fifth syllable, and then the line is divided with a mechanic exactness.

As,

Spreads undivided, || operates unspent.

Hor. Mr. Pope, in a letter to Mr. Walth, speaking of the English verse, says, ' there is naturally a pause at the fourth, fifth,

' or

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 9

‘ or sixth syllable. It is upon these the ear rests, and upon the judicious change and management of which depends the variety of versification.’ Of this he gives the following examples :

At the fifth.

Where e’er thy navy || spreads her canvass
wings,

At the fourth.

Homage to thee, || and peace to all she
brings.

At the sixth.

Like tracts of leverets, || in morning snow.

Eug. In this place, Mr. Pope takes no notice of the second pause, which always rests on the last word of each line, and is strongly marked by the rhyme. But, it is on the balance between the two pauses, that the monotony of the verse depends. Now,
this

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this balance is governed by the equal division of the line in point of time. Thus, if you repeat the two first examples given, you will find no difference, as to the time, whether the pause falls on the fourth or fifth syllable; and this, I think, will extend even to the last example: or, if there should be any difference, it is so trifling, that it will generally escape the ear. But this is not so in blank verse; for, the lines being made often to run one into the other, the second pause is sunk; the balance, from the equal division of each line, is removed; and by changing the pauses at pleasure, an open is given into an unlimited variety.

OBSERVE the effects in the first lines of Paradise Lost.

Of man's first disobedience, || and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, || whose mortal taste
Brought

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 11

Brought death into the world, || and all our
woe,

With loss of Eden, || till one greater Man
Restore us, || and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse.

IN these, and the lines which immediately
follow, the pauses are shifted thro' all the
ten syllables.

Hor. But this variety is not inseparable
from the nature of blank verse. In Addi-
son's *Cato*, there is, I think, the very same
monotony which you have condemned in
Mr. Pope: Thus,

The dawn is overcast, || the morning low'rs,
And heavily in clouds || brings on the day;
The great, th' important day ||
Big with the fate || of *Cato* and of *Rome*.

Again,

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Again,

Who knows not this? || but what can Cato do
Against a world, || a base degenerate world,
That courts the yoke, || and bows the neck
to Cæsar?

Pent up in Utica, || he vainly forms
A poor epitome || of Roman greatness.

Asp. THIS is the very echo of the couplet
measure.



Eug NOTHING could be more to my purpose; it confirms all that I have advanced; and proves further, that the monotony of the couplet does not proceed, as has been imagined, from the repetition of the rhymes, but from a sameness in the movement of the verse. No doubt, the use of rhymes was the first cause of confining poetic harmony to
such

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such narrow limits [c]. Mr. Addison, accustomed to the secure Monotony of the couplet, had neither the genius to bear him thro', nor courage to attempt the unbounded variety of the Miltonic measures. Birds of a weak flight move always in a line; but, the Eagle, wonderful in his soarings, shews in his very stoops the power of his wing. A poet, of a superior spirit, must have resources in the variety of his numbers. The flight of Satan, in *Paradise Lost*, is not to be pent up in a couplet.

Then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and without longer
pause,

[c] Ἄλλα καὶ πῶς ἡδῶς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς πολλὰ συνθεῖς
οἱ ἀνδρες ἦτοί, περὶ τὰς μεταβολὰς καὶ τὴν ποικίλτην ὁρᾶν
ἐντοχῶν. Dion. Hal. De Struct. Orat.

Down

14 REMARKS ON THE

Down right into the world's first region
throws

His flight precipitant ; and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique
way,

Amongst innumerable stars.

Hor. In comparing, as you have done,
the gradations in poetic harmony to the
flight of birds, by the soarings and stoops
of the Eagle, I presume, you mean some-
thing equivalent to those enforcements and
lowering of sounds, which give such a pleas-
ing variety, and have so powerful an effect
in music.

Eug. Of this we have a fine example in
the following passage ; in which you'll ob-
serve, that the Poet sets out with almost
a prosaic weakness of verse ; thence rising

gra-

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 15

gradually, like the swell of an organ, he
soars into the highest dignity of sound.

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose
guile,

Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from heav'n, with all his
host

Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the most high,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battel
proud

With vain attempt. Him the almighty
power

Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal
sky,

With

16 REMARKS ON THE

With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless Perdition, there to dwell
In adamantinè chains, and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

Par. Lost.

It is obvious from what I have said of it, that the Couplet is not formed for such gradations as these. On the contrary, from the sameness in its flow, every sentiment, of what nature soever, comes equally recommended to the ear, and of course to our attention. Thus, the following thought in *Eloisa to Abelard*, receives as much importance from the movement of the verse, as it could have done, had it been destined to inspire us with the most noble and virtuous feelings.

Not Cæsar's empress wou'd I *deign to prove*:
No, make me mistress to the man I love.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 17

Asp. THIS sentiment may, as you have observed, receive an importance from the movement of the verse; but you will allow, that it is very little indebted to the expression.

Eug. THE expression must often be disgraced, when a rhyme is necessary. You have made, *Aspasia*, a much better use of this passage, than I meant to do: for I produced it merely to shew, that where a sameness of verification prevails, there can be no degrees, no contrasts in the sounds, which, like shades in painting, throw forward, and give a distinction to the superior beauties,

Hor. Mr. Pope seems to have had the same idea, with respect to the thoughts, that you have with respect to the sounds.

C

He

18 REMARKS ON THE

He says, 'To be too heightening on every part, is monstrous: some parts ought to be lower than the rest; and nothing looks more ridiculous than a work, where the thoughts, however different in their own nature, seem all on a level.'—

Letter to Mr. Wallis

Eug. I wonder he did not perceive the ill effects of this equality in the cadence of his verse, as well as in the colouring of his ideas. Of all the modes of versification, that have been cultivated by men of sense, the [d] Latin distich, and modern couplet are the greatest levellers. There is no di-

[d] The couplet, like the distich, has a strong epigrammatic turn: it is formed to run into points; but, above all, it delights in the antithesis; and the art of the versifier is complete, when the discord in the ideas is

berty,

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berty, no continuance in their movements.

Like the out-line of a scholar in drawing, they are broken, and interrupted; but, a flow of pencil is the stile of a master in his art. Would you have a proof of what I advance?

Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,
Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions
blefs;

Bear me, oh bear me to sequester'd scenes,
The bowry mazes, and surrounding greens.

W. Forest.

Here, you cannot but be sensible, how the enthusiasm is tamed by the precision of the couplet, and the consequent littleness in the scenery.

proportioned to the accord in the sounds. To jar and jingle in the same breath, is a master piece of Gothic refinement.

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How different Milton?

Yet not the more
Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling
flow,
Nightly I visit.

Par. Lost

Tho' it do not immediately belong to this
part of my subject, yet I must take notice
here of a beauty, which finds its place na-
turally in blank verse, but is almost incom-
patible with the regular movement of the
couplet. I mean those sudden breaks or
transitions in the verse, which so strongly
characterize the passions; and dart, as it
were,

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 21

were, a sentiment into the inmost soul of the reader.

Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
Said then the lost Arch-angel, this the seat
That we must change for Heav'n, this
mournful gloom

For that celestial light. *Be it so*, since he
Who now is sov'ra'n can dispose and bid
What shall be right: *farthest from him is best*,
Whom reason hath equal'd, force hath made
supreme

Above his equals. *Farewell, happy fields*,
Where joy for ever dwells. *Hail horrors, hail*
Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell
Receive thy new possessor.

Par. Lost.

In the pathetic speeches of Dido, in the
fourth Æneid, there are many fine ex-

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amples of the force that may be given to a sentiment, by these sudden breaks and transitions in the verse: yet, these are entirely lost in the English translation. It cannot be said, that Dryden wanted feeling. To what then can we impute this weakness, if it be not to the invariable tameness and regularity of the couplet? You, Hortensio, may be convinced of this, by comparing the English with the Roman poet: but, Aspasia must be satisfied some other way. I will therefore repeat Mr. Dryden's Translation of a particular passage; after which, I will give you one in blank verse, which, I think, enters more into the spirit of the original. As I am certain, Aspasia, that you remember both the passage and the occasion, it will require no introduction.

As

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 23

[c] As if the peaceful state
Of heavenly powers were touched with hu-
man fate !

But go: thy flight no longer I detain,
Go seek thy promis'd kingdom thro' the
main ;

Yet, if the heavens will hear my pious vow,
The faithless waves, not half so false as thou,
Or secret sands shall sepulchres afford
To thy proud vessels, and their perjured
Lord.

Then shalt thou call on injured Dido's name.

Asp. I HOPE, Eugenio, your blank verse
will give the poor queen a little more spirit.

[c] Scilicet si superis labor est, ea cura quietos
Sollicitat ! Neque te teneo, neque dicta refello.
I, sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas !
Spero equidem melius, se quid pia lumina possunt,
Supplicia hausurum scopulis, ac nomine Dido
Sape vocaturum —

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Egg. You shall judge for yourself —

Think we, such toils, such cares disturb the
peace

Of heav'ns blest Habitants? Alike I scorn
Thy person and imposture. Go, pursue
Thro' seas, thro' storms thy visionary throne;
In thy mid-course, if justice rules above,
O may destruction wait thee! may'st thou,
dash'd

On some avenging rock, call, often call
On lost Eliza —

It often happens in the couplet versifi-
cation, that, when the poet has fully ex-
pressed his idea, the necessity of a rhyme
obliges him to weaken its effect by the ad-
dition of some unnecessary circumstance;
as in the following instance —

We

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 25

[f] What do I say? where am I? fury turns
My brain; and my distemper'd bosom burns.

Dryden.

Sometimes this is carried to a ridiculous
excess.

[g] To those whom fevers burn, the pier-
cing smell

Of vigorous wine is grievous, *Death and*
Hell.

Creech.

We are tempted to laugh at such trifling as
this. But what shall we say, when the
noblest images are ruined for the sake of a
jingle?

[f] Quid loquor? aut ubi sum? Quæ mentem in-
sanâ mutat?

Vir.

[g] At cum membra hominis percepit servida febris,
Tam sit odor vini plagæ mactabilis inlar.

Lucretius.

He

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[4] He spoke, and awful bends his sable
 brows;
 Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the
 nod;
 The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God.
 High Heav'n with trembling the dread
 signal took,
 And all Olympus to the centre shook.

Rope

Had it not been for the rhyme, that third
 line had never found its way into this de-
 scription. I need not observe to you, how
 it interrupts the succession of the ideas, and

[4] Η, καὶ κυανηοῖν ἐν' ὄφρ' οὐκ ἔστι προσηνέ

Ἀμβροσίαι δ' ἀπὸ χυλαῖς ἐκέρχονται ἀνὰ τοὺς

Κεφαλῇ, καὶ ἀνὰ τοὺς ὤμους, καὶ ἀνὰ τοὺς ὀπίσθους

Dixit, et alta supercilij, et Saturnian

Ambrosia: vera comæ concussæ sunt regis.

A capite immortali; ac magnum tremescit O-

lympum.

embar-

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 27

embarrasses the image. It was owing to the same cause, that Jupiter is represented shaking his curls, before he had given the nod; whence, that which in the original was a happy effect, becomes in the translation a trifling action.

App. I FORGIVE you this time, Eugenio, but let me have no more translations.

Eug. Your reproof is just, as the force of the last example turns on a comparison, which it is not in your power to make. I shall not forget the attention due to you a second time.

HAVING thus far shewn that blank verse has many advantages over rhyme, and that it leaves the poet infinitely more at large with respect to the sense, the sound, and the

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the expression: I shall conclude this part of my subject, with a remark on the ill effect, in our language, from the prevalence of that hissing consonant, the S*. The Greeks, we are told, had such an aversion to this letter, that they called it the savage, the impure letter: if this were so in a language rich in vowels, what must it be in one so over-charged with consonants as ours? When the necessity of a rhyme throws the governing verb in a period into the present time, all the other verbs thro' that period must follow the lead; thus—

Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.

Es. on Man.
Here, instead of the melting warble of a lark, we have the dissonant hissing of a serpent,

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serpent. Should it be said to this, that these are objections rather, to the nature of our language, than to the art of the poet; I answer, it may be so, while it is under the servitude of rhyme: but why should we prefer that mode of verification, which aggravates the imperfections of our own language, and prevents our imitating, or adopting the beauties of others? To pursue these reflections minutely, would be to descend from the character of a critic to that of a grammarian; I shall therefore content myself with observing, that it is a fault, to suffer any one letter to take possession of the ear, or to govern entirely the sound of the verse; unless, where the alliteration is brought in aid of the sense; in which case, it may sometimes become a beauty: but certainly, it is not a beauty in the following instance. —

Each

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Barb which his sev'nfold shield display'd,
And half unseath'd the shining blade.

Or,

By the hero's armed shades,
Glist'ning thro' the gloomy glades.

Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.

In a less careful versifier, such effects might be imputed to negligence; but here, I doubt, they were designed as beauties. When the habit of playing with sounds is once admitted into poetry, it branches out into innumerable triflings. We cannot, in this case, be too much on our guard against the force of example. The reputation of a writer makes even his errors fashionable: we naturally imitate those whom we admire; and when we cannot assume their graces, we adopt their foibles. I fear,

Aspasia,

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 31

Aspasia, that this minute criticism has tired
your patience.

Asp. Not at all: I look upon it as an art-
ful lowering of your subject, from whence
you are to rise to the sentimental harmony.

Eng. You give authority to my ideas, by
the use you make of them.

In treating the second part of my sub-
ject, you will, no doubt, expect, that I
should borrow, as I have already done, my
examples from Milton: but here, I am
tempted to change my author; principally,
as it gives me an opportunity of doing jus-
tice in this particular, to the most extraor-
dinary genius, that our country, or, per-
haps, any other, has produced. It seems
then to me, that, Shakespear, when he at-

tends

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tends to it, is not only excellent in the mechanism of his verse, but, in the sentimental harmony, equal, if not superior to any of our English poets. The first example I shall give you of his merit in this kind, is in the celebrated speech of King John to Hubert, when he first opens to him his designs on the life of Arthur.

Hubert.

I am much bounden to your majesty.

K. John.

Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet;
But thou shalt have; "and creep time ne'er
so slow,

Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.

I had a thing to say—but let it go:

The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day

Attended with the pleasures of the world

Is all gone wanton, and too full of gawds,

To

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 33

To give me audience. " If the midnight
bell

" Did, with his iron tongue and brazen
mouth

" Sound on unto the drowfie race of night ;

" If this fame were a church-yard where
we stand,

" And thou possessed with a thousand
wrongs ;

" Or if that furly spirit, Melancholy,

" Had bak'd thy blood and made it heavy-
thick,

" Which else runs tickling up and down
the veins. &c.

Hor. I ALLOW you, that in these lines,
there is a general agreement between the
sound, or [i] rather, between the movement

[i] The necessity of this distinction will appear from
hence, that the movement of a verse may be good, and
the sound at the same time may be faulty. —

D

of

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of the verse and the idea which it conveys; but it will not so readily be allowed you that this was designed: and the generality of readers will, I dare say, esteem it rather casual than artificial.

Eug. WHEN a man strongly affected by any passion, expresses himself in words, the

As,

Music her soft assuasive voice applies.

Ode on St. Cecil.

There is a continued hiss thro' this line—

The Greek Critics carefully observed this distinction: thus Aristotle—*Λογὸν δὲ κινουμένην μὲν λόγον, τὸν ἔχοντα ῥυθμὸν καὶ ἀρμονίαν καὶ μέλος*.

By the *ῥυθμὸς* was meant the measure or movement of the verse; by *μέλος*, the sweetness of the sound; and by Harmony, the agreement of either, or of both with the idea. The French Critic, Dacier, by not entering into this distinction, has fallen into a strange error; for he supposes that by the *ῥυθμὸς* and *μέλος* Aristotle meant the dancing and music which usually accompanied the Greek drama. But I cannot conceive how either dancing or piping could be reckoned a constituent part of versification—*Λογὸν, τὸν ἔχοντα ῥυθμὸν, &c.*—Especially, if, as this same Critic informs us, the dancing and music were at the end of the Acts.—

natural

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 35

natural tones of which correspond with his ideas; it may possibly be by accident. But when we observe the same co-incidence in a Poët, it is most reasonable to suppose, that it is the effect of design. For as he has time to select his images and sentiments, so he has likewise to accommodate the movement of his numbers to the nature of those ideas he means to express.

Alg. I HAVE heard, that there have been Philosophers who supposed that all the beauties in nature were produced by chance; I fancy, they would not have been well pleased, to have had the beauties in their writings included in the jumble.

Eug. WERE we to follow the common notions concerning Shakespear, we should be induced to think, that he struck out

D 2 A 514 to him his

his pictures by dashing his pencil against the canvass; or that, like the Sibyl in Virgil, he was only a temporary instrument, to convey the dictates of a superior agent.

Hor. MR. POPE has given some encouragement to this notion, where he says—
 ‘The poetry of Shakespear is inspiration
 ‘indeed: he is not so much an imitator as
 ‘an instrument of nature; and ’tis not so
 ‘just to say that he speaks from her, as that
 ‘she speaks thro’ him.’

Assp. THESE distinctions are too subtle for me. I shall never be brought to consider the beauties of a Poet in the same light that I do the colours in a Tulip. —

Eug. THE beauties of Shakespear’s versification appear accidental when they are

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 37

most artificial: for, the mechanism of his verse, however [k] carefully formed to have its effect, is so fashioned to the temper of the speaker, and nature of the subject, that we overlook the artifice; and it passes along unheeded, as the casual flow of an unstudied eloquence. Thus the bold and resolute Petruchio.

Have I not in my time heard lions roar ?

Have I not heard the sea, puffed up with winds,

Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat ?

[4] Yet must I not give nature all : thy art

My gentle Shakespear, must enjoy a part.

For tho' the Poet's matter nature be,

His art doth give the fashion : and that he

Who calls to write a *living line*, must sweat

(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat

Upon the Muses anvil —

Again —

In his well torned, and true filed lines.

Ben Johnson,

to the memory of Mr. William Shakespear.

Have I not heard great ord'nance in the
field?

And heav'ns artillery thunder in the skies?

Have I not in a pitched battle heard

Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets
clangue?

In support of the sentimental harmony in these lines, you may observe, how, by changing the pauses, and varying the movement, the poet has at once guarded against a monotony, and enforced his ideas. Would you see his artifice in its full light, let us follow him through a succession of varied movements. Is there not something mournful in the cadence of these lines?

Constance.

What dost thou mean by shaking of thy
head?

Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?

What

. BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 39

What means that hand upon that breast of
thine?

Why holds thine eye that lamentable
rheum? *K. John.*

How different are the accents of the un-
happy Constance, in this solemn and ear-
nest address to Heaven?

Arm, arm, ye Heavens, against these per-
jur'd kings!

A widow cries, Be husband to me, Heav'n!

Let not the hours of this ungodly day

Wear out the day in peace; but 'ere sun-set,

Set armed discord twixt these perjured kings;

Hear me, oh, hear me!

Observe what starts of passion succeed,

Austria. Lady Constance, peace.

Const. War, war, no peace; peace is to
me a war.

B 4

O Lymoges,

O Lymoges, O Austria ! thou dost shame

That bloody spoil : thou slave, thou wretch,

thou coward,

Thou little valiant, great in villany !

What a fool art thou,

A ramping fool, to brag, to stamp and swear

Upon my party ; thou cold blooded slave,

Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my
side ?

Does the anxious heart lament its lost peace ?

O gentle sleep,

Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted

thee,

That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids

down,

And steep my senses in forgetfulness ?

Why rather, Sleep, ly'st thou in smoaky

cribs,

Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,

And

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 41

And hush! with buzzing nightflies to thy
slumber;

Than in the perfum'd chambers of the Great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?

K. H. IVth.

MARK, how the terrors of a guilty mind
echo thro' these lines —

- - - O it is monstrous! monstrous!
Methought the billows spoke, and told me
of it;

The winds did sing it to me, and the thun-
der,

That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pro-
nounc'd

The name of Prosper —

Tempest.

WOULD

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WOULD you compare, Aspasia, the tender breathings of a Lover, with the bold and swelling tones of a soldier ?

Glendower— She bids you,
All on the wanton rushes lay you down,
And rest your gentle head upon her lap ;
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you ;
And on your eye-lids crown the God of
sleep ;

Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness ;
Making such difference betwixt wake and
sleep,
As is the difference betwixt day and night,
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd
team
Begins his golden progress in the east.

In agreement with the ideas, the poet has drawn out these lines into a languid monotony.

Oribello,

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 43

Othello.

Farewel the plumed troops, and the big war,
That make ambition virtue! Oh, farewell!

Farewel the neighing steed, and the shrill
trump,

The spirit stirring drum, th' ear piercing fire,

The royall banner, and all quality,

Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious
war;

And, oh, you mortal engines, whose rude
throats

Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counter-
terfeit,

Farewell! — *Othello's occupation's gone.*

Ap. That close, Eugenio, was happy.

Or, is it, that the change in your voice has
given that effect to the verse?

Eug. The voice of a Garrick cannot lend
beauties to Shakespear; it is no small praise
that

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that he can do him justice. When such contrasts as these, which I have brought together, are made to succeed each other suddenly, and in the same breath, so that we immediately feel the transitions; then, the several parts have, not only the intrinsic beauties of musical imitation, but likewise a relative advantage from their comparison one with the other; and this may, with some allowance, be called the clear-obscure of harmony. The following passage, in *Cymbeline*, is a proof and illustration of what I have advanced.

Bellarius.

O! thou Goddess,
Thou divine nature! how thyself thou
blazon'st

In these two princely boys! they are as
gentle

As

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 45

As Zephyrs blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as
rough

(Their royal blood enshaf'd) as the ruff
wind

That by the top doth take the mountain
pine,

And make it stoop to th' vale.

With what dignity do the numbers
move in the opening of this address? In
the close, they spring into a storm, and
sweep all before them.

Hor. I recollect, in *Lear*, a beautiful ex-
ample of a most affecting transition in the
sound, corresponding with a sudden and pa-
thetic change in the idea.

Lear.

I tax not you, you elements, with unkind-
ness;

I never

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I never gave you kingdoms, called you
children;

You owe me no subscription. Then let fall

Your horrible pleasure; — here I stand your

brave;

“A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old
man.”

Again, when Hamlet prevents Horatio
from drinking the poison,

Hamlet.

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity a while,

“And in this harsh world draw thy breath
in pain.”

The breast actually labours to get through
this last line.

Eug. And yet these arts pass unnoticed
in Shakespear, while they are celebrated in

Poets

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 247

Poets of inferior merit. The cause of this may be, that we more readily observe any artifice in the management of the sounds, when we are not much affected by the ideas.

It is in excellent poetry, as in capital painting, the fine and delicate touches of art are lost in the general effect. It requires some degree of temper to trace the minute and auxiliary beauties of poetic harmony thro' such a passage as this. —

Othello.

Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear:
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go?

Now — How dost thou look now? Oh ill-
starr'd wench,

Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at
compt,

This

This look of thine will hurl my soul from
heav'n,

And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold,
my Girl,

Ev'n like thy chastity. O cursed slave!

Whip me, ye Devils,

From the possession of this heav'nly sight,

Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur,

Plunge me in steep-down gulphs of liquid
fire.

BEFORE we quit Shakespear's versification, I must observe to you,—that he intended it to be nothing more than a measured [1] or musical prose; except, when he

[1] In general, Shakespear's verse has the easy prosaic flow of the Iambic: on extraordinary occasions, it rises into the dignity and harmony of the Hexameter. Thus, he has greatly the advantage of the Greek Tragedians, who were confined to the Iambick; and of the French, who, from the regularity of the Couplet, cannot loosen their verse into a prosaic movement. That Shakespear's
meant

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 49

meant to rise in his subject, or give a distinction to a thought; and then, we shall always trace in his numbers the influence of his feelings; and find, that they assume a regularity and harmony, in proportion as he was interested in the effects. Nothing could be more opposite to the genius and character of this Poet, than a constant equality of versification; nay, it is easy to see that he has often been careful to avoid it. The same is observable in Milton, who sometimes descends into a prosaic negli-

versification is agreeable to nature, may be proved from the authority of Aristotle, who having observed, that the Iambick measure was best adapted to the genius of tragedy, because it came the nearest to common discourse, proceeds thus—

Λίγιστε δὲ γίνονται, αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τοῦ ὁμιλοῦ μέτρον ευρί-
μαλιστα γὰρ λικνέει τῷ μέτρῳ τὸ ἰαμβικόν ἐστὶ. σημεῖον δὲ
τούτῳ πλεονεχὲς ὅτι ἰαμβικὰ λίγα μὲν ἢ τῇ ἀσπασίᾳ τῇ πρὸς
ἀλλήλους· ἐξαρμύρα δὲ ὀλιγαίαι, καὶ ἀσπασίαι τῆς ἀσπασί-
αυτοῦ. Cap. iv. De Poetica.

E

gence,

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gence, merely to interrupt the monotony ;
and, has frequently chosen to disgrace his
measures, rather than to fatigue the ear.

Hor. SOME Critics do not understand this
so, when they tax his verse with being often
weak and unequal.

Eug. THE error then must have been in
his judgment; for, these inequalities were
most certainly designed.

HAVING in this place supported an ob-
servation on Shakespear, by a proof drawn
from the practice of Milton, it may not be
improper to shew, that the versification of
these two poets had other points of re-
semblance.

Full many a Lady
I've ey'd with best regard, and many a time,

Th.

THE NO MARKS
BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 51

Th' harmony of their tongues hath into
bondage

Brought my too diligent ear; for several

virtues,

Have I lik'd several Women, never any

" With so full soul, but some defect in her

" Did quarrel with the noblest grace she

ow'd,

" And put it to the foil. But you, O you!

" So perfect, and so peerless are created

" Of every creature's best.—

Tempest.

In this passage, the rising from the feeble
and prosaic movement of the first lines, to
the even tenor of harmony in the last, is
entirely Miltonic. Or, to speak more justly,
it is one of those fine gradations in poetic
harmony, which give a kind of growing
energy to a thought, and form a principal

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beauty in the versification of Shakespear
and Milton.

Hor. THERE is a species of harmony, Eugenio, of which you have made no mention; and yet, some of our poets seem to delight much in it; I mean the imitating the precise idea in the sound; as, in the whispering of the breeze, the tumbling of ruins.

Eug. OR, The rumbling of Drums, as thus,

The double, double, double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum
Cries, Hark, the foes come. *Dryden:*

THIS is altogether ridiculous; that rule of Criticism, the sound should seem an echo to the sense, must not be understood too literally.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 53

literally. The sounds should, indeed, be always in accord with the sense; but they should accompany, not mimic it. As the movements of a good dancer are governed by the music, so the music of the verse should be governed by the idea: but, the nature of language will not admit, in this latter case, of a constant correspondence: however, though we cannot, so often as we might wish, make our numbers harmonize with the subject, we should never suffer them to run counter to it—as they too evidently do in the following instance.

Not half so swift the trembling doves *can* fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky;
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When thro' the clouds he drives the
trembling doves.

Windsor Forest.

E 3

I have

54 REMARKS ON THE

I HAVE not met with any lines more at variance with their subject than these: instead of running lightly off, they do cleave to the tongue.

To prescribe how far we may go in this kind of imitation, is impossible, otherwise than by examples; for this, like many other beauties in poetry, can be determined only by a happiness of feeling.

THE author of the Fleece has carried the sentimental harmony to the utmost allowable point, in the following description of a sudden calm.

with easy course

The vessels glide; unless their speed be
stopp'd
By dead calms, that oft lie on those smooth
seas,

While

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 55

While every Zephyr sleeps; then the
shrouds drop;

The downy feather on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat sea shines like yellow

gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of some old temple, wide.

It is evident, that the poet studied the effect in these verses; but he has softened his artifice by the simplicity of his language; had it not been for this, the labour would have been manifest. Hence it appears, that the perfection of this species of harmony consists in its seeming wholly accidental: and this can only be, when the words are so happily chosen, and the sounds are so connected with the idea, that they seem all to spring from one and the same motion of the soul.

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Hor. LET us, at the same time, suppose the idea to be beautiful, and then, your description will reach much farther than you intended; for, it takes in, not only a part of good writing, but, perhaps, the whole.

Eug. FROM this point, we may take a general view of our subject. We began by considering harmony simply as an address to the ear: thence, we traced its correspondence with the idea, and, of course, with the imagination. The simplest truth is pleasing by its very nature; but this pleasure cannot be too much heightened; the force and surprise of imagery, the elegance of diction, the varied accords of harmony tend all to this point. Poetry is to the soul, what the sun is to nature; it calls forth, it cherishes, it adorns her beauties. As we improve our language, we multiply
the

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 57

the resources of poetry ; of all the means of forwarding this improvement, the forming and perfecting our versification is the most powerful

Asp. I did not imagine, Eugenio, that the flow of a verse could have taken so large a range.

Eug. It extends still farther. Why does the eye fill with gladness, at the bare mention of a great or generous action ? The mind is pre-disposed to receive the finest impressions : the true direction and happiest effect of poetry, is, by renewing these impressions, to preserve the mind in a state of sensibility : we are induced to repeat those impressions, by the pleasing sensations with which they are attended : for, the supreme Goodness has so formed our organs, that

5

those

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those arts which tend most to refine our feelings, and, of consequence, our manners, give us at the same time the greatest pleasure. Now, it is probable, that all the powers which produce these refined pleasures spring from one common principle, as it is evident they tend to one common end: for there is such an intercourse among them, that, while we perfect our sensations in any one of them, we acquire a general aptness for them all.

Hort. Must not the moral sense partake, in some measure, of this general connexion?

Eug. The author of the *Characteristics* will answer you much better than I can do [m]: “The mind, which is spectator

[m] Inquiry concerning Virtue.

I

“ or

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 59

" or auditor of *other minds*, cannot be with-
 " out its *Eye* and *Ear*; so as to discern pro-
 " portion; distinguish sound, and scan each
 " sentiment or thought which comes before
 " it. It feels the soft and harsh, the agree-
 " able and disagreeable, in the affections;
 " and finds a *foul* and *fair*, a *harmonious* and
 " a *dissonant*, as really and truly here, as in
 " any musical numbers, or in the out-
 " ward forms or representations of sensible
 " things."

DIA-

The mind, which is spectator
 will answer you much better than I can
 The author of the Characteristics

DIALOGUE II.

Aspasia, Hortensius, Eugenio.

Her. **T**HE moment, Eugenio, you left us yesterday, Aspasia betook herself to her Shakespear: her eagerness to apply the hints you have given her, is not to be satisfied; and she seems to enjoy her discoveries, like one who had suddenly acquired a new sense.

To nobler sights,
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed.

Asp.

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Eug. WERE you to examine thoroughly the difference between Taste and Genius, you would have the satisfaction to find, that there are few men who are entitled to a submission from you on this account.

Ass. LET me, Eugenio, owe this obligation, as I have done many others, to you.

Eug. As our conversation yesterday turned intirely on poetry, we may preserve a connexion, by considering the qualities to be examined, solely as they relate to that art. When they are once determined in any one mode, it will be easy to extend them to eloquence in general, and from thence to every art in which they are naturally exerted.

A POET

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 63

A POET illustrates one object by a comparison with another : he discovers a just and beautiful relation between two ideas : this is Genius. Aspasia feels in its whole force the merit of that invention ; this is Taste. Now, it is evident, that there must be a great difference between the perceiving a beauty that is discovered for us, and the making that discovery ourselves : accordingly, we are assured by experience, that a man of quick perception, may be of slow invention ; and that a lively reader may be a dull poet.

Hor. We are so apt to over-rate our own talents, that I do not at all wonder, that so many men should, in themselves, mistake Sensibility for Genius. Are we not too much encouraged in this error by the vanity of Critics and Commentators, who are continually

64 REMARKS ON THE

tinually insinuating to us, that they partake, in some measure, of that Divinity, which they attribute to their poets.

Eng. UNHAPPILY, they support their pretension by the [u] authority of Cicero, who was himself the strongest exception to it. In short, Hortensio, the best Critic, considered merely as such, is but a dependent, a sort of planet to his original; he does no more than receive and reflect that light, of which his poet is the fountain.

Asp. If you mean that I should have a clear conception of Genius, you must descend from these exalted ideas to its effects.

[*] Quorum omnium interpretes, ut Grammatici Poetarum, proxime ad eorum, quos interpretantur, divinationem videntur accedere—

Cic. de Divin. l. i.

Eng.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 65

Eug. THE distinctive property of Genius is to surprize, either by original Beauty, or Greatness in the idea. These are the master springs; but there are others which are subordinate: for a superior genius will so dress the most common thought, or familiar image, as to give it some unexpected advantage; by which it becomes apparently, if not really, original: the result is the same; we are surprized; every such effect implies a degree of novelty, and, consequently, of Invention.

Hor. Is not surprize rather the effect of wit than of genius?

Eug. To determine this, we must state the difference between them. This seems to me to depend on the degrees of our penetration,

F

netration,

66 REMARKS ON THE

netration, and the nature of our feelings. The man of wit has a limited view into the relations of ideas; and from those which he does see, his feelings direct him to choose the most singular, not the most beautiful. He works upon us by surprise merely; but the man of genius surprises by an excess of beauty.

Hor. It should seem to follow from hence, that the genius may be a wit when he pleases; yet we have seen such, who have made the attempt without success.

Eng. VERY rarely, when they give into the practice of being playful: thus, who has more wit than Shakespear? If others have failed, it must have been from the influence of a better habit: accustomed to unite ideas by their beauties, they overlook the

REMARKS ON THE BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 67

the little points of similitude in those which are the most opposed; or, of difference, in those which are the most united: hence, as Cunning is but a short-sighted Wisdom, Wit may be called the short-sight of Genius.

Hor. You make a greater difference between them than will be allowed by many.

Eug. I use them in that sense, in which they are understood, when we say, that Ovid had wit, and Virgil genius: that this is the most exact and received sense of these words, will appear from hence, that, were I to assert, that Virgil had more wit than Ovid, I should be laughed at: yet this would be the consequence of understanding

ing Wit in too [ø] enlarged a sense, or of making it equivalent to Genius.

Ass. I HAVE been often ill satisfied with myself, for not readily entering into such thoughts, as I have known were generally esteemed witty. You have, I thank you, Eugenio, lessened the number of my mortifications. I must own, I have always preferred Humour to Wit, perhaps it was, that I more easily understood it. I should call upon you for a better explanation of this matter, were I not more intent on

[ø] In the Essay on Criticism, it is said—

True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd.

But immediately after this, the Poet adds—

For works may have more wit than does 'em good.

Now, let us substitute the definition in the Place of the thing, and it will stand thus. A work may have more of *Nature dress'd to advantage* than will do it good. This is impossible; and it is evident, that the confusion arises from the Poet's having annexed two different ideas to the same word—

another.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 69

another. You remember, that, discoursing the other day, on a passage in the *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, in which, the superiority of Poetry is rather hinted at than explained, you promised me, that you would enlarge this part of the subject, and —

Eug. I UNDERSTAND you, Aspasia; and should be glad, in this, as in every thing else, to prevent your wishes.

I OBSERVED just now, that the distinctive property of Genius is to surprise, either by original Beauty, or Greatness, in the idea.

THE principal beauties in Poetry, spring from the force or elegance of its images : of these, we will first examine such as are

peculiar to Poetry; after which, we will pass to those which are in common to Poetry and Painting. Of the former class, are all images founded on comparisons, either direct, or implied. The merit of these consists in a striking similitude between two objects, which, to common observation, have no apparent or necessary connexion: hence we may judge of the merit of a comparison, by the degree of our surprise, which arises from a combined admiration of its justness, its novelty, and beauty. A comparison is direct in the following instance—

— — — — — On her left breast
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson
drops
I' th' bottom of a cowslip—

Cymbeline.

An

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 71

An implied comparison, or, in the language of the Critics, a metaphor, consists in conveying an idea intirely by the substitution of an image: this will be best understood by an example. —

ANGELO, in Measure for Measure, observing, that his guilty passion for Isabella, was inflamed by his knowledge of her innocence, is shocked at the wickedness of his nature; which he aggravates by the force of a metaphor.

Can it be,
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness! "having waste
ground enough,
" Shall we desire to raise the Sanctuary,
" And pitch our evils there? Oh fie, fie,
fie."

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SOMETIMES a Poet has the happiness to blend these two kinds of beauty in the same image: he sets out with illustrating his object by a direct comparison; and continues to support it by a metaphor. This is a high degree of beauty; for, it can only happen, when the comparison is so exquisitely just, that the qualities essential to the borrowed object, are, with the utmost propriety, transferred to the original one. Thus Bellarius, describing to his pupils, the ruin of his fortunes at court.

: - - - Cymbeline lov'd me,
And when a soldier was the theme, my
name
Was not far off: then was I as a tree,
Whole boughs did bend with fruit. But in
one night,
A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 73

Shook down my mellow hangings, hay,
my leaves;
And left me bare to weather.

Cymbeline.

Of this species of beauty, the following
is, perhaps, a still more elegant example—

- - - She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek.

Twelfth Night.

SHAKESPEAR'S images are not mere addresses to the fancy; they do not play about the surface of an object; they carry us into its essence.—As, where the mother of Hamlet endeavours to excuse his extravagance.—

This

74 REMARKS ON THE

This is mere madness ;
 And thus a while the fit will work on him :
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,
 Ere that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
 His silence will *fit drooping*.

HAD the Poet commanded at one view
 the whole circle of Nature, he could not
 have selected such another contrast to
 madness. It is the most perfect image of a
 patient, innocent, and modest silence, that
 ever sprung from human invention. It is
 by the frequency and degree of these beau-
 ties, principally, that an original Genius is
 distinguished. Metaphors are to him, what
 the Eagle was to Jupiter, or the Doves to
 Venus, symbols of his Divinity ; the sure
 indications of Majesty and Beauty.

Her.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 75

Hor. It has been a matter of wonder to many, that an imagination, at times, so wild and ungovernable as that of Shakespear, should, in the finer imitations of nature, be distinguished by an unequalled elegance and propriety.

Eug. If we consider the nature and progress of the imagination, we need not wonder, that superior spirits should be the most subject to these excesses. The extremities of poetic boldness, like those of personal courage, will often have a tincture of extravagance. But, this will not be the case in men of subordinate talents; trusting more to imitation than their own feelings, they move in one even tenor; with them, judgment is but an observance of rules; a security to their weakness.

And

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And often, to their comfort shall they find
The sharded Beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full wing'd Eagle.—

Cymb.

THE last species of beauty in comparative imagery, which I shall speak of here, consists in reducing a metaphor to a point. When a picture is given us in a single word, to make out which, in our own imagination, we must go through a succession of ideas, then are we surprized in the most agreeable manner, and the beauty, of course, is consummate. You shall have, Aspasia, an example of this from your favourite author, Fletcher. Amintor, in order to conceal the cause of his grief, had put on a show of mirth; Melantius, his friend, who wanted to extort the secret from him, was not to be so imposed on.

You

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 77

You may shape, Amintor,
Causes to cozen the whole world withall,
And yourself too ; but tis not like a friend,
To hide your soul from me ; 'tis not your
nature

To be thus idle ; I have seen you stand
As you were *blasted*, midst of all your mirth.

Maids Tragedy.

It is by the force or elegance of its allu-
sions and images, that a poetic diction is
distinguished from simple versification. The
Muses, according to Johnson, have their
anvil, and a verse may be laboured into
precision and harmony : but, the fallies of
the imagination are prompt and decisive ;
they spring at once into being, and are
beauties at their first conception. Thus,
in the language of a Poet, the sun is the

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eye of heaven: the heaven itself—a starry
pavement; a canopy fretted with golden fire.

Does the mind exult in its fullest freedom?

It is—as broad, as general as the *cas*ing air.

What are the repeated calamities of life?

The *slings* and *arrows* of outrageous fortune?

The properties of sleep?

The *birth* of each days *life*; fore labour's *bath*;

Balm of hurt minds.

Are our tender years exposed to the infection
of vice? — the canker galls the *infants* of
the *spring*. Is the night invoked to counte-
nance deeds of horror and cruelty?

Come, thick night!

And pall thee in the dunest smoke of hell!

Hor. How miserably naked of these
beauties are the works of our ordinary
songsters?

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 79

songsters? Their metaphors are like the scattered trees in a desert, starved and solitary: in Shakespear, they are vigorous, luxuriant, thickly spread over every part of his poetry.

Eug. This comparifon will hold, with respect to images in general: as to these, which we have been juft describing, they seem to me, to bear some resemblance to those drawings of the capital Painters, in which, though the parts are rather *binted* than made out, yet the ideas are compleat; they both give a delightful exercise to our minds, in continuing and enlarging the design. Thus, when the queen would persuade Hamlet to lay aside his mourning:—

Good Hamlet, cast thy *nighted* colour off.

This

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This metaphor seems, at first, to reach no farther than the gloominess of Hamlet's dress; but if our ideas go along with the poet's, we shall extend it to the melancholy of his mind [p].

Hor. THE manner in which you have expressed yourself in this place, gives me some reason to imagine, that, joined to the pleasure which you have here remarked, we have a kind of selfish enjoyment on these occasions; for, while we enter into the views, and obey the direction of the Poet, we fancy that we co-operate with him; we grow proud of the connexion, and plume

[p] This is plain by Hamlet's answer.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
That can denote me truly. —

ourselves

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 81

ourselves in his beauties. But let me not interrupt you.

Eug. The purpose of Imagery is either to illustrate, or aggrandize our ideas : of the former, enough has been said.

THE greatness of an image is most obvious, when it strikes us by its immediate power, and with a sudden effect ; as, in the description of Satan in *Paradise Lost*.

- - - - - He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r.

A SECOND species of the sublime consists in giving a gradation to imagery. There is not, perhaps, in Poetry, a nobler instance of this, than in the description of Satan's return to hell—

G

He

§2 REMARKS ON THE

He through the midst, unmark'd,
 In show Plebeian Angel militant
 Of lowest order, pass'd; and from the door
 Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
 Ascended his high throne, which under
 state
 Of richest texture spread, at th' upper end
 Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
 He sat, and round about him saw unseen:
 At last as from a cloud his fulgent head
 And shape Star-bright appear'd.

Par.-Left.

Hort. WHILE you repeated these lines,
 Eugenio, I felt myself affected with the
 same kind of pleasure, as when we see a
 cloud rising slowly from the vale, become
 by degrees the ornament of the heavens.
 Might I, therefore, judge from my own
 feelings, I should conclude, that such images

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as are in motion, and which, by a gradual enlargement, keep our senses in suspense, are more interesting than those, which owe their power to a single impression, and are perfect at their first appearance. Where there can be no gradation in an object, its influence on the mind is immediately determined.

Eug. In this observation, we see the reason, why the principal beauties in *Paradise Lost*, have been naturally thrown on the person of Satan. To describe a permanent and unchangeable glory, is to paint without shades; the Sun is more delightful in its setting, than in its meridian. The divine Perfection, pure and Angelic natures, can have no clouds, no contrasts; they are all one blaze. But, it is not so, in the description of fallen Greatness; of diminished

84 REMARKS ON THE

and interrupted splendor; of a superior nature sunk and disgraced, but emerging at intervals from its degradation. This is a subject so truly poetic; it gives rise to such a train of fluctuating images, that, let the object be ever so obnoxious, if the danger, as in the present case, be remote, it seizes on the imagination, all calmer considerations are thrown aside, and the senses are hurried away beyond the reach of reflection.

Alp. This is the best apology I ever heard for a diabolical greatness.

Eug. As a great effect was produced in the last instance by a gradation in a single image, so may it equally proceed from the arrangement or succession of different ideas:

Of

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 85

Of this, the following description of a storm
is a singular example.

Prospero.

Hast thou, Spirit,
Perform'd to point the tempest that I bad
thee ?

Ariel.

To every article :
I boarded the King's ship: now on the
beak,

Now in the waste, the deck, in every cabin
I flam'd amazement. Sometimes I'd divide
And burn in many places : on the top mast,
The yards, and boltsprit, would I flame
distinctly,

Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings the
precursors

Of dreadful thunder-claps, more momen-
tary

36 REMARKS ON THE

And light out running were not; the fire
and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring, the most mighty
Neptune
Seem'd to besiege, and make his bold waves
tremble;
Yea, his dread trident shake.

Tempest.

THE circumstances in this description are brought together in a manner so unexpected; they crowd on each other with such force and rapidity, that our spirits are in one continued hurry of surprise. You may observe, that this impetuosity gives way by degrees to a more regular climax: we set out with surprise; we end in wonder.

Hor. I must add one remark to those which you have made on this passage. The
sub-

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 87

substituting the divinity of the sea, to the thing itself, was a masterly stroke of conduct. How it sublimes the object?

Eng. You have seen in the last instance, that the sublime is produced [s], partly, by the choice of great circumstances; partly, by the rapid succession of those circumstances: on the other hand, the Beautiful, which tends to delight, not, to transport us, may receive an equal advantage from the succession of the ideas, and this, on a principle quite opposite to the former—

From camp to camp, through the foul
womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds;

[ε] Ο μιν γὰρ τὸ ἐκλογὴ τῶν ἀκρῶν λημμάτων, οὐδὲ τὴ
πυκνότητι τῶν ἐκδιλιγμένων.

Longinus, Sect. 10.

G 4

That

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That the fixt centinels almost receive
 The secret whispers of each others watch.
 Fire answers fire, and through their paly
 flames
 Each battel sees the others umber'd face.
 Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful
 neighs,
 Piercing the Night's dull ear; and from the
 tents
 The armourers accomplishing the knights,
 With busy hammers closing rivets up
 Give dreadful note of preparation.

Chor. to H. V.

WE may observe in the progression of
 sounds, a perfect correspondence with what
 has been here remarked concerning our
 ideas: for, in music, we are *transported* by
 sudden transitions, by an impetuous re-ite-
 ration of impressions: on the contrary,

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 89

we are *delighted* by a placid succession of lengthened tones, which dwell on the sense, and insinuate themselves into our inmost feelings. The analogy between Poetry and Music is not confined to these two effects. We know, that in both these arts, a well supported climax is a constant source of the sublime. Again, as in musical composition, harmony is the result of a well chosen union and succession of sounds, so, in Poetry, there is a harmony or beauty, which springs from the most natural and pleasing arrangement of our ideas.

Asp. I READILY comprehend, that a gradual rise from smaller circumstances to greater, should be productive of the sublime, because, a contrary process has always a mean effect. Of a beauty of order distinct

90 REMARKS ON THE

stinct from this, I have not so clear a conception.

Eug. The beauty of order may be proved by the following experiment. Were you, in the above description of a night scene, to change the order of the circumstances, you would find, that each particular idea would lose a part of its force, and that the general effect would be considerably weakened. What can be the reason of this, but that the arrangement of the ideas is, at present, such, as to give the greatest truth and evidence to the thing represented; so that the imagination, not being delayed, or embarrassed by the necessity of studying its object, receives every impression, as it offers, with facility and promptness? It is on this principle, that, in the general plan, or disposition of a subject, we are so well pleased

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 91

pleased with that perspicuity of order, that clearness of connexion, by which the several parts seem to grow out of each other, and the satisfaction of the understanding every where keeps pace with the pleasures of the imagination. From these observations we may draw the following conclusions; first, that fine writing depends as much on a happiness in the arrangement, as in the choice of our ideas: in the next place, that all such progressive energy or beauty as has been here described, must, equally with those images which are founded on comparison, be entirely foreign to painting.—

Hor. We cannot, it is true, paint a comparison or a metaphor; but, we may represent the various affections and passions of the mind, by clothing them in images, and as it were, drawing forth the soul into feature

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ture and action. Here, it should seem, that the Painter and Poet go hand in hand; and it may be, with some advantage to the former, as his imitations come nearer to a reality.

Eug. You have opened upon us a new scene of imagery. As to your remark on the Painters advantage, I must observe to you, that the merit of these *simple Images*, or Pictures, whether it be in poetry or painting, cannot consist merely in their justness; for, this is no more than what we *expect*; it must therefore spring, either, from an exquisiteness in the degree of beauty; or, from a happiness in the circumstances. Of the former, we have a fine example in the description given by Bellarius of his princely pupil—

This

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 93

- - - - - This Paladour,
(The heir of Cymbeline and Britain) Jove!
When on my three-foot stool I sit, and tell
The warlike feats I've done, his spirits fly

out

Into my story; say, Thus mine enemy fell,
And thus I set my foot on's neck;— even
then,

The princely blood flows in his cheek, he
sweats,

Strains his young nerves, and puts himself
in posture

That acts my words.

Cymbeline.

Of equal beauty, tho' in a different kind,
is the following picture of Love and Sor-
row.—Imogen, on her husband's going in-
to banishment, had sent her servant Pisanio
to attend him to the ship; on his return,

she

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the questions him as to the particulars of her husband's departure—

Imogen.

Thou shoud'st have made him ev'n
As little as a Crow, or less, ere left
To after-eye him—

Pisan. Madam, so I did,

Im. I would have broke mine eye strings,
crack't 'em but

To look upon him—

Nay, follow'd him, 'till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat, to air, and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.

Cymbeline.

THE difference between poetic and real
Painting, may be clearly seen in this last
example: the circumstances in this descrip-
tion, which tend to heighten the beauty
of

of the image in the last line, cannot be expressed by the Painter; he can have no advantage from a succession of ideas. If, in subjects that are in common to the Poet and Painter, the latter be limited; so again, there are many, from which he is totally excluded. In this view, I shall continue, as I began, to mark the advantages peculiar to poetry. In each of these two last examples, the image surprises by the degree of its beauty. But, there are others which owe their effect, as I have said, to a happiness in the circumstances. Of this, we have, I think, an example in that beautiful scene, in the Tempest, between Ferdinand and Miranda.

Mir. Do you love me?

Ferd. O heav'n, O earth, bear witness to this
soud,

And

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And crown what I profess with kind event,
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert
What best is boaded me, to mischief! I
Beyond all limit of what else in the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.

Mir. I am a fool
To weep at what I'm glad of.

TEARS of gladness are not uncommon ;
but, Miranda, from her particular education,
could have no knowledge of the passions in
their extremes ; she is therefore surpris'd at
this apparent confusion in their symptoms :
her surprise is a spring to ours —

THIS leads us, you see, to an essential
point in the pathetic, namely, when a senti-
ment springs with a peculiar happiness from
the character and the occasion.

Thus

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 97

Thus the Poet —
The Heats and Minutes of affairs are
watch'd,
And the nice Points of Time are met, and
snatch'd,

As these lines were written in praise of
Fletcher, I shall give you an example of
the thing described, from his Maid's Tra-
gedy—Melantius, on his arrival at Court,
hears that his friend Amintor was that morn-
ing married. He knew that he was con-
tracted to Aspasia ; but did not know that
she had been deserted by him : in this in-
stant Aspasia comes across him—

Melantius.

- - - Hail, maid and wife
Thou fair Aspasia ! may the holy knot
That thou hast ty'd to day, last 'till the hand

H

Of

Of age undo it! may'st thou bring a race
 Unto Amintor, that may fill the world
 Successively with soldiers — Asp. My hard
 fortunes

Deserve not scorn; for I was never proud,
 When they were good —

When we know that Aspasia thought
 herself insulted by the brother of her happy
 rival, this sentiment becomes so affecting,
 that our hearts melt, and our eyes fill in the
 instant.

The uniformity in our feelings on similar
 motives, though it be the ground-work of
 the pathetic, yet, at the same time, it na-
 turally produces in us an indifference to all
 such indications of passion as are obvious
 and general.

THE

BEAUTIES OF POETRY: 59

THE business therefore of the Poet, is to give some unexpected advantage to these general feelings; either, by a happiness in the incidents from which they spring; or some peculiarity in the situation and character of the person affected: of this we have a complete example, when the Daughters of Lear press hard upon him to reduce the number of his Knights—

Regan:

— — — — — If you come to me,
(For now I spy a danger) I intreat you
To bring but five and twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice—

Lear. I gave you all.—

THE ingratitude of a daughter, who owed every thing to a father's generosity, might

H 2

naturally

100 REMARKS ON THE

naturally produce such a reproach as this—
but it receives an additional tenderness from
the violent character of Lear, and the ag-
gravating circumstances of his children's
conduct.

If the Pathetic, as should seem from these
proofs, must owe its effect to the occasion
which produced it; the same may be affirm-
ed, in part, of the sublime: I say in part,
because though great sentiments, when pro-
duced in the Drama, must, in common with
the pathetic, derive a particular and spe-
cific beauty from a happiness in their ap-
plication; yet there will be this difference
between them; that if a pathetic sentiment
be considered independent of the occasion
which produced it, it loses its pathetic force.
On the other hand, if a sublime sentiment
be considered in the same light, it loses the
advantage

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 101

advantage it received from a happiness in its application, but retains its intrinsic greatness. This, I think, will appear, by comparing the answers of Aspasia and Lear, in the two last examples, with the following reply of Guiderius, to the rash and foolish Cloten, who had threatened to kill him.

Cloten.

Art not afraid?

Guid. Those that I rev'rence, those I fear,
the wise;

At fools I laugh, not fear them.

This sentiment had been noble on any occasion; on this, it is happy as well as great.

From these observations it is evident, that the variety and force of our sentiments,

ments, particularly in the pathetic, must depend on the variety and nature of their motives. In this the Painter is extremely confined; for among the infinite turns and workings of the mind, which may be expressed by words, and become the springs of sentiment, there are so few to which he can give a shape or being; and his indications of peculiar and characteristic feelings, are so vague and undecisive, that his expressions, like their motives, must be [q] obvious and general.

[q] If Painting be inferior to Poetry, Music, considered as an imitative art, must be greatly inferior to Painting: for as Music has no means of explaining the motives of its various impressions, its imitations of the Manners and Passions must be extremely vague and undecisive: for instance, the tender and melting tones which may be expressive of the Passion of Love, will be equally in unison with the collateral feelings of Benevolence, Friendship, Pity, and the like—Again, how are we to distinguish the rapid movements of Anger, from

It

It is observable, that the same Critics, who condemn so much in Shakespear a neglect of the unities, are equally forward in acknowledging the singular energy and beauty of his sentiments. Now, it seems to me, that the fault which they censure, is the principal source of the beauties which they admire. For, as the Poet was not confined to an [*r*] unity and simplicity of action,

those of Terror, Distraction, and all the violent agitations of the Soul? But, let Poetry co-operate with Music, and specify the motive of each particular impression, we are no longer at a loss; we acknowledge the agreement of the sound with the idea, and general impressions become specific indications of the Manners and the Passions.

[*r*] Aristotle, in his Poetics, chap. vi. observes, that the first Dramatic Poets were irregular in the conduct of the Fable; but excelled in the Manners, and in the Diction: that the Poets of his time, on the contrary, excelled in the conduct of the Fable, but were weak in the Manners, and declamatory in the Diction. By the

he created incidents in proportion to the promptness and vivacity of his genius. Hence, his sentiments spring from motives exquisitely fitted to produce them: to this they owe that original spirit, that commanding energy, which overcome the improbabilities of the scene; and transport the heart in defiance of the understanding. I do not mean by this to justify our

Manners, are to be understood all those sentiments which become indications of Character. The advantage of these in Tragedy, according to Aristotle, consists in this, that they give us a rule, by which we may judge what the resolutions and actions of the persons in the Drama will be. After this, he censures the Poets of his time, for being weak in the Manners. *Αἱ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ᾠδῶν, ἀνθὶς τραγωδίας εἰσι.* Dacier, his Commentator, has passed the same censure on the French Drama—Aujourd'hui, dans la plus part des pièces de nos Poètes, on ne connoit les mœurs des personnages, qu'en les voyant agir. As both the Greek and French Poets, here spoken of, were rigid observers of the dramatic Unities, these facts must strongly confirm what has been advanced on this subject.

Poet

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 105

Poet in all his excesses. It must be confessed, that he has often carried the indulgence of his genius much too far : but, it is equally certain, that a rigid observance of the dramatic unities is not free from objections : for, as no one simple and confined action can furnish many incidents, and those, such as they are, must tend to one common point, it necessarily follows, that there must be a sameness and uniformity in the sentiments. What must be the result of this ? Why, narration is substituted in the place of the action ; the [r] weakness in the manners supplied by elaborate descriptions ; and the quick and lively turns of passion are lost in the detail, and pomp of declamation.

Hart. May we not add to these an objection, which has often struck me, and which

which extends to the conduct of the fable itself? When the action is confined to the time of the representation, the Poet must often bring events together within the space of four hours, which, in the natural course of things, would have taken up as many days. Thus, by a strange kind of management, he commits a violence on nature, in order to come nearer to truth.

Eug. It is, to soften, in some measure, this impropriety, as well as to conform to the unities, that these events, instead of being brought into action, are so often thrown into [s] narration. But, this is a subject which cannot be properly examined in a morning's conversation: beside, we

[s] *Εἰς τὴν τραγωδίαν μίμησις πρᾶξιός τε οὐκ ἔστι καὶ τίλειται — καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας*

Arist. De Poetica. Cap. vi.

have

have other objects which demand our attention.

It is a point that has not yet been determined, how far Imagery may take place in the Pathetic. Were the imagination to have no share in our designs upon the heart, the Poet's task would be, indeed, a hard one. The difficulty then can only be, to set bounds to this indulgence. It must be allowed, that in the extremities of passion, all studied and ambitious ornaments are to be avoided: hence I should judge, that those images which are founded on comparison, can have little agreement with the simplicity of the Pathos: and this disagreement will always be found to increase in proportion as the points of similitude are specified and enlarged. But this objection will not extend to simple images: these are
often

often happily employed in the Pathetic; in these, Poetry co-operates with Painting; and even borrows her ideas from her sister Art—

Thus, in anger—

Romeo.

Alive, in Triumph, and Mercutio slain?
Away to heav'n respective lenity,
And [*t*] fire-ey'd Fury be my conduct now!
In grief—

Juliet. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?

R. and J.

[*t*] Should this compound Epithet "fire-ey'd" be thought inconsistent with the true Pathos, it will be the strongest proof that can be given, of the necessity of a strict simplicity on all such occasions.—

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 103

Of all our passions, that of Love should seem to have the greatest connexion with the fancy. If, therefore, the distinction here made between simple and comparative imagery, should hold good in this passion, it will hardly be disputed in others. I shall rest the truth of my observation, as I have hitherto done, on examples.

Juliet.

Sweet, good night ;
This bud of love, by summers ripening
Has breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next
we meet.

R. and Y.

This is not the language of nature ;
true passion is impatient of studied embellishments

110 REMARKS ON THE

lishments. Let us now see, how far the operations of the fancy may be brought to correspond with the movements of the heart —

Ferdinand.

Wherefore weep you ?

Miranda. At mine unworthiness, that dare
not offer

What I desire to give ; and much less take
What I shall die to want : but this is trif-
ling ;

And all the more it seeks to hide itself,
The bigger bulk it shews. Hence *bashful*

Cunning,

And prompt me, plain and holy Innocence:

I am your wife, if you will marry me ;

If not, I'll die your maid : to be your
fellow

You

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. III

You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,

Whether you will or no.

Ferdinand. My mistress, dearest,

And I thus humble ever.

Miranda. My husband then.

Ferdinand. Ay, with a heart as willing

As *Bondage* e'er of freedom; here's my hand.

Miranda. And mine, with my heart in't.

IN the images here employed, there is no artifice, no design; they are as simple as Truth herself.

Thus far, *Aspasia*, I have endeavoured to give you some general ideas of the principal beauties in Poetry. I shall now proceed to those which I call the subordinate Beauties; not, that they are always inferior

in their effects, but because those effects are produced by means less obvious; and spring more from the manner, than from the idea itself. This is a distinction, which, in some cases, will be preserved with ease; in others, with difficulty: however, if the nature of the beauty, whatever it is, be well understood, I cannot think it of any great consequence in what class it is to be ranked.

It is the peculiar province of Poetry, to raise us above the level of our ordinary ideas. But we are not to expect, that this can be done by a continued succession of beautiful images, or affecting sentiments. Here then, Art comes in aid of Nature; and our ideas must derive an importance from the manner in which they are conducted.—
With what a singular delicacy does Ophelia,
when

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 113

when she solicits Hamlet to take back his presents, reproach him with the change in his affections?

Hamlet.

No, I never gave you ought.

Opb. O my good Lord, you know right well you did,

And with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd,

As made the things more rich; *that perfume*
lost,

Take these again.—

THE manner is somewhat varied in the following instance; Camillo, in the Winter's Tale, endeavours to dissuade the young Lovers from exposing themselves to the crosses of fortune.

I

You

114 REMARKS ON THE

- - - - - You know,
Prosperity's the very bond of Love,
Whose fresh complexion, and whose heart
together,
Affliction alters.

Perdita. - - - One of these is true ;
I think affliction may subdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind—

FROM an elegance in the turn of the
thought, we naturally pass to a Felicity in
the expression.—Thus, Posthumus reflect-
ing on his Wife's infidelity.

Me of my lawful pleasures she restrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance ; did it with
A pudency so rose, the sweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn ; that
I thought her
As chaste as *unfann'd Snow*.—

Cymb.
Hor.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 115

Hort. UNSUNN'D SNOW—The expression is beautiful: but is not the image likewise new, and wholly Shakespear's?

Eug. YOU'RE in the right, Hortensius; but I was so intent on the force of the Expression, that I quite over-looked the novelty in the idea. The completion of Beauty is in their Union: of this we have an exquisite example, where Jachimo steals upon Imogen as she slept.

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd
sense

Repairs itself by rest: our Tarquin thus
Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd
The Chastity be wounded.

Cymbeline.

I 2

To

To represent Lucretia by personifying her virtue, was a beauty in the Thought: the elegant precision with which the action is described, is a beauty in the Manner. In this analysis, we discover the limits between Nature and Art; for if by Nature we mean the intrinsic Merit in the Thought; by Art must be understood, 1. Every advantage given to that thought, to the improvement of its original beauty. 2. Every such happiness in the manner, as supplies the want of Novelty in the Idea.

Ap. THE first part of your description of Art, has been fully explained by the examples you have given: but, I do not as yet, clearly comprehend, how a happiness in the manner can supply the want of Novelty in the Thought.

Eug.

Eug. WE can bestow a Novelty on a known object, either by discovering in it some new circumstance or quality ; or by varying and improving its usual impression. We have an example of the former, in the reflexion made by Helena on the vanity of her love for Bertram.

- - - - - Indian like
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that *looks upon his worshiper,*
But knows of him no more.

All's Well, that Ends Well.

AGAIN, when the Shepherd, in the Winter's Tale, is questioned by Polyxenes, concerning the love of Florizel for Perdita —

12

Shepherd.

Shepherd.

- - - - - Never did the *Moon*
So gaze upon the waters, as he'll stand,
And read my Daughter's eyes.

I now come, Aspasia, to the explanation you desire. When a known object presents itself to us, through a new and unpracticed medium, we consider the novelty as inherent in the object. It is much the same with respect to our ideas; whatever is original in the Representation, is transferred to the Thing represented. For instance — The consideration that all men have sprung from the same origin, and are destined to the same dissolution, has been often employed, as a check on human pride, and an incitement to a social affection. How is this urged by the Poet?

Arviragus.

Arviragus.

- - - - - Brother, stay here;
Are we not Brothers?

Imog. So man and man should be;
But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whose dust is both alike.

Cymb.

Is not the energy with which this Idea is conveyed, equivalent to a novelty in the Idea itself? The same effect may be produced by a happiness in the use and application of a known image—As in the advice given by Lady Macbeth to her Husband.

*Look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't.*

Hor. FROM the light which you have thrown on this subject, we may account for the opposition in our judgments, when we bestow on Writers the reputation of being Original. For, a Poet may be original in the manner, and not at all so in his Ideas.

Eug. TRUE Genius, Hortensio, will be original in both: of this we shall have a further proof, in the use that Shakespear has made of the qualities and attributes of the Heathen Divinities. And here, I cannot but wonder, that a Poet, whose classical images are composed of the finest parts, and breath the very spirit of the antient Mythology, should pass for being illiterate.

See

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 121

See what a grace was seated on his brow!
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;

An eye-like Mars, to threaten or command;

A station, like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heav'n-kissing hill.

Hamlet.

IN this portrait, the features are borrowed from the antique; but they are united into a character by a creative fancy. — This power of giving an advantage to the most familiar objects, by some unexpected happiness in their use and application, is particularly distinguished in our Poet, when he touches on the Fables of Antiquity. — Thus Perdita, at a loss for

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for a variety of flowers to bestow on her
guests—

- - - - - O Proserpina
*For the flow'rs now, that frighted thou lefst
fall*

*From Dis's waggon ! Daffadils
That come before the Swallow dares, and
take*

*The winds of March with beauty; Vio-
lets dim,*

*But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.*

EXCLUSIVE of the purpose for which I
have produced these lines, you must have
observed the uncommon art of the Poet, in
characterizing his flowers.

- : - They at her coming sprung.

BEAUTIES OF POETRY. 123

A FINE imagination, like the presence of Eve, gives a second vegetation to the beauties of nature. In these principles, and in the examples by which they have been supported, we see clearly the reason, why every enlightened age has had, and must continue to have, its original Writers. We have no right, therefore, to complain, that Nature is always the same; or that the sources of Novelty have been exhausted. It is in Poetry, as in Philosophy, new relations are struck out, new influences discovered, and every superior genius moves in a world of his own.

F I N I S.

